



MILVERTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL

FGB MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 25 March 2026, 18.00

Governors Present		In Attendance	
Linda Burton (Chair)	LA Governor	Gloria Hamlet (items 1-4)	Finance Officer
Clare Adams (from item 4)	Parent Governor	Kathryn Lanning (via Teams)	Clerk
Stephen Jones	Co-opted Governor		
Chris Mann (Vice-Chair)	Co-opted Governor		
Kieran Neale	Parent Governor		
Stephen Penny	Staff Governor		
Nicola Stoddart	Headteacher		
Fiona Taylor (from item 4)	Co-opted Governor		
Emily Weiss (from item 4)	Co-opted Governor		

Item 1 – Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 There were no apologies for absence.
- 1.2 There were no new declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.

Item 2 – Minutes of the last FGB meeting: 28 January 2026

- 2.1 The Board approved the minutes of the FGB meeting held on 28 January 2026.

Item 3 – Matters Arising / Action Tracker

- 3.1 The Board noted updates to the Action Tracker as follows:

REF	ACTION	OWNER	UPDATE
FGB Meeting held on 26 March 2025			
Para 9.1	Upload statutory school policies not on website to GovernorHub	Clerk	Done as far as possible
FGB Meeting held on 28 January 2026			
Para 4.4	Board to complete skills and effectiveness questionnaire	All	Done – on agenda
Para 4.4	Financial benchmarking to be considered at next meeting	GH	On agenda

Para 7.6	New DfE Data Protection Complaints Process to be brought to Board	HT	Next meeting
Para 7.10	H&S and Fire Audits to be uploaded to GovernorHub	HT/Clerk	Done
Para 9.1	Safeguarding Audit: Restrictive Interventions Policy, reflecting new DfE guidance, to come to next FGB	HT	On agenda
Para 9.3	Safeguarding Audit: check all governors have Prevent training certificates	Clerk	All governors have carried out Prevent training within last 2 years; certificates are available.

Item 4 – Finance

a) Month 10 Finance Report (paper)

- 4.1 GH advised that the end of year uncommitted carry forward had increased from £26,719 at Month 9 to £30,301 at Month 10 (compared with a budgeted deficit of £53,917) However, this needed to be treated with caution as she was unsure whether anticipated High Needs funding would be received and also because it was no longer possible to track energy costs data. Savings were broadly as reported in the Month 9 report. Pre-school had recently been allocated an Early Years National Insurance Contribution Grant of £2,654.

Question: can anything be done about the fall in parental contributions for trips and activities?

Response (HT/GH): we do send letters to parents but we can only ask for voluntary contributions for activities that are part of the national curriculum such as swimming. Swimming costs will increase next year, but we have estimated a fall in contributions.

Question: what is the assessment deficit of £145?

Response (GH): the school buys assessment papers every year and this year they were more expensive than anticipated.

Question: the PE and Sport Grant is showing a deficit, does that mean we have not received all of the grant?

Response (GH): because the school year covers two financial years the grant used to be awarded in two unequal parts – 7/12 and 5/12. The DfE changed this so that the grant is awarded in two equal parts, but this happened after this year's Budget had been set.

b) 2026/27 Budget

- 4.2 GH advised that, although the Budget Plan predicted an in-year deficit of £26,521, provided the BO2 Uncommitted Revenue carry forward from 2025/26 is £26,719 there will be a surplus balance of £198. This will be monitored closely throughout the coming year and further savings made where possible. DFCG funding would be used wherever possible to support building maintenance etc.

Clare Adams, Fiona Taylor and Emily Weiss arrived at this point

- 4.3 Items identified in the School Development Plan had been costed and included in the Budget Plan. It had been necessary to use estimates for services provided by County and these had been included at last year's costs plus 5%.

Question: have there been any further developments with the proposal from County to top-slice school budgets to help schools with deficit budgets and to help meet SEND needs?

Response (HT): the DfE would not allow Somerset County to impose a SEND levy; there has been no further news about a levy to help schools with deficit budgets.

Question: if FSM vouchers are stopping, who will cover this provision and will there be an additional cost to the school?

Response (HT/GH): it is the FSM vouchers for during school holidays, introduced during Covid, that are now being withdrawn. We are directing our more vulnerable families to food banks and other local charities. There will be no additional cost to the school.

Question: it says in the Budget Plan that there will be no school support grant this year. Is that a problem?

Response (GH): we received this for 2025/26 as a one-off payment to support last year's pay awards.

4.3 The Board approved the 2026/27 Budget Plan.

c) Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) Submission 2025-26

4.4 The Board approved the SFVS submission for 2025-26.

d) Benchmarking

- 4.5 The HT presented DfE financial benchmarking data which is based on the number of pupils on a school's register and commented that Milverton staff costs per pupil seemed high compared to the schools it is benchmarked against. However, this is because pre-school children (almost 30 at Milverton) are not included in the total number of pupils, but total staff costs include up to 6 pre-school staff, some of whom have additional contracts for running breakfast club and after school activities. Premier Sport costs for running sports clubs are also included in total staff costs as is the cost of paying a teacher from Wellington School to run a weekly one-hour drama class. Milverton also has a lot of very experienced teachers; when recruiting consideration is given to employing ECTs (Early Careers Teachers) but not at the expense of teaching quality. In addition, data on the DfE website is for 2024/25 so does not reflect staffing reductions made for 2025/26.

Question: is it possible to split costs in a more meaningful way, and is Milverton benchmarked against Somerset schools or schools nationally?

Response (HT): DfE is responsible for the way data is presented and we are compared with other similar-sized schools nationally.

Question: could we do our own benchmarking against another similar sized school that we know has a pre-school?

Response (GH): only if we know of one ourselves – it would not be possible to identify a school from the benchmarking data.

Question: do you get the opportunity to feedback on data anomalies?

Response (HT): we could feed back to our educational relationship managers but I don't believe they could do anything about the way the DfE chooses to collect and present data.

- 4.6 Governors noted the DfE benchmarking data for 2024/25.

Gloria Hamlet left the meeting at this point.

Item 5 – Appointments

- 5.1 The Chair advised governors that Martin James and Rachel Ford had resigned from the Board as, in both cases, other commitments meant they felt unable to commit fully to their role on the Board. This meant the Board was now carrying 3 co-opted governor vacancies, together with vacancies for the Vice-Chair, Sustainability Link Governor and Health & Safety Link Governor. **Chris Mann was elected as Vice-Chair and Stephen Jones agreed to be Sustainability Link Governor.** The role of H&S Link Governor would be held over pending new appointments to the Board.

ACTION: Board to appoint a Health & Safety Link Governor

- 5.2 The Chair advised that she had found a potential candidate to fill one of the vacancies and had invited him to observe the next meeting. The HT commented that she would like to show him – and any other potential new governors – around the school before that meeting.
- 5.3 Governors were asked to think about whether they had any contacts who might be interested in joining the Board. It was also suggested that staff could consider whether any parents of children currently in year 6 might be interested and the HT would give some thought to this.

ACTION: All

Item 6 – Chair’s Update (oral)

- 6.1 *Confidential item (contained in part B minutes)*

Item 7 – Headteacher’s Report (paper)

- 7.1 The HT updated governors as follows:

September 2026 Reception intake

- 7.2 The school had received 22 first choice applications for Reception in September, but it was hoped that this number would increase when final numbers are available in April.

Attendance

- 7.3 Efforts to improve school attendance were bearing fruit and from September 2025 to February half term attendance was 95.3% - 0.3% above the national average. Persistent absence was 9.89% - 3.8% lower than the national average.

Staff

- 7.4 Two new members of staff had been appointed – an apprentice and an experience HLTA. Performance management meetings had taken place for support staff and SDP-linked objectives had been set.

Wider opportunities

- 7.5 Children had been involved in a wide range of activities, as listed in the HT Report, including residential trips, space projects, sports festivals, a bomb disposal workshop, river studies, Met Office workshops etc.

Question: did the Year 3 and 4 historical trail of Milverton involve the village archive society?

Response (HT): I have been in touch and am waiting to hear if they can support the curriculum-based knowledge we need to teach.

Premises

- 7.6 An electronic staff and visitor sign-in system was going to be installed which would bring Milverton in line with other schools and improve safeguarding procedures. Visitors are asked to leave their phones in the office.
- 7.7 Quotes were being obtained for new phones in advance of the digital phone switch taking place in January 2027 when BT switches off analogue phones; hopefully the cost could be met from the DFCG funds.

Preschool

- 7.8 Preschool has continued to grow this term with increasing numbers on roll reflecting the positive reputation of the provision within the local community. A recent Mother's Day event had been well attended, providing a valuable opportunity for parents and carers to spend time in the setting and celebrate learning with their children. Staff development and training was progressing well. Discussions were continuing with County over how best to use available space more productively and obtain funding for a more cohesive Foundation Unit for pre-school and Reception.

Question: what is a new unit likely to cost?

Response (HT): it was suggested by County that the original plan to locate Reception next to Pre-School presented a number of obstacles, including the lack of space required for additional toilets. Advisors have agreed to take further advice and get back to school with other possibilities using the available space. Advisors suggested that extending our provision to provide an additional room would cost in the region of £150k, we would need to consider grant funding in a future year.

School Council

- 7.9 The School Council has been very active and has planned some fundraisers for quiet KS1 and playground activities. Following a suggestion from the School Council, children are now being given the opportunity to play their musical instruments in assemblies with a rota for children to play entry and exit music at Thursday singing assemblies.

Curriculum

- 7.10 There will be significant changes to the teaching of religious education from September 2026, with the introduction of a new Somerset agreed syllabus. Changes were also being made to the teaching of Relationships, Sex and Health Education with effect from September 2026 and the school would consult parents on these over the summer term.
- 7.11 Sequencing of teaching in some foundation subjects (science, geography, history and art & design) had been reviewed and the decision taken to move from a two-year rolling programme to a one-year programme. Staff were aware that a new national curriculum would be implemented in two years' time but felt that a one-year programme would give children a better curriculum offer and were 100% in support of the change. County's Inclusive Curriculum Team had been consulted and the Education Endowment Foundation model for implementation change was being followed to support robust assessment and planning so that staff can hit the ground running in September.
- 7.12 The current Reception class contains a large proportion of children with high communication and interaction needs. The class comprises 20 boys and 10 girls and a high number of the children have summer birthdays. Talk Boost intervention is being implemented to support this need.
- 7.13 Maths support from the Boolean Maths Hub continues, with a focus on reasoning.

Safeguarding

- 7.14 The HT and Office Manager have attended single central record training and participated in a recent audit of the school's single central record carried out by the Safeguarding Lead at County. Only a few minor tweaks were identified and these would be shared with the Safeguarding Governor on her next visit to the school.
- 7.15 To date 96 concerns have been logged this year on MyConcern and the school continues to make referrals for support where appropriate and to give clear messaging to children to support their understanding of inappropriate behaviour.
- 7.16 All actions identified from the Safeguarding Audit carried out last term were either complete, or training diarised. The HT would shortly be attending County training on how to develop procedures for invacuations and evacuations in the event of major threats such as terrorism or intruders on the school premises.
- 7.17 Off-site provision for pupils was discussed. Ofsted will look at this and governors may be asked if they are aware.

Bullying

- 7.18 Parents and carers have been invited to a forum to share and review the school's relational approach to behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures (in response to comments on the parent survey).

SEND

- 7.19 Governors noted the detailed SEND update included in the HT Report and that the DfE would be launching new SEND Reform Principles from September 2026. The key principles are:
- Early identification – children should receive the support they need as soon as possible
 - Local – children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a school close to their home
 - Shared – education, health and care services should work in partnership
 - Effective – reforms should be grounded in evidence
 - Fair – every school should be resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs

Schools would be expected to provide 'targeted' and 'targeted plus' support themselves, whilst specialist support would only be provided for the most complex needs that cannot be met in the school setting. The proposals would be implemented via a ten-year plan and schools would need significant levels of funding and training. Governors discussed how the proposals might work in practice and agreed that more information was needed about this.

Question: does this mean it will not be possible to apply for an EHCP from September?

Response (HT): applications can continue to be made for the next 3 years and children who already have EHCPs can retain them.

School Development Plan

- 7.20 The HT outlined the following updates to the SDP:

Key Priority 1 (Quality of Education): as discussed earlier, the two-year rolling curriculum programme would move to a one-year programme from September 2026. The PINS project continues to go from strength to strength supporting inclusion for neurodiverse children. Current focus is on years 3-4.

Key Priority 2 (Behaviour and Attitudes/Personal Development): attendance continues to improve and is above national average. Developing a relational approach is proving effective with further

training planned for support staff. The HT encouraged governors to visit the school and explore children's understanding of British Values.

Key Priority 3 (Leadership and Management): to support staff wellbeing, the decision had been taken to ask parents not to email class teachers direct but to email the school office or HT who would then forward emails to class teachers during working hours.

Key Priority 4 (Early Years): provision continue to go from strength to strength and is being led very positively by Mrs Smith.

Ofsted

- 7.21 The school's Self Evaluation Form is being re written to reflect the new Ofsted Inspection Framework. SLT are drafting a two-page Ofsted ready document and a more detailed comprehensive spreadsheet of key strengths and areas for development to inform forward planning and developments.

Item 8 – Board Effectiveness Review

- 8.1 The Clerk outlined the results of the GovernorHub Board Effectiveness Review that all governors had undertaken recently. Lowest scoring responses in the overview were to the following statements:

I am able to influence/motivate others in my team: the HT suggested this might relate to governors carrying out monitoring, reporting back to the Board which might result in questions/challenge.

I know the strengths and weaknesses of my Board: this should now have been addressed by carrying out the review.

I know the strengths and weaknesses of my school: the HT stressed the importance of governors being knowledgeable about these and at the next meeting would share the updated Self Evaluation Form which identifies strengths and weaknesses.

ACTION: SEF to be brought to the next meeting

- 8.2 A number of governors had said they would welcome training in various topics. The Clerk advised that training/guidance is available on all of these in GovernorHub Knowledge and encouraged governors to explore this resource.

ACTION: All

Item 9 – Governor Monitoring

- 9.1 The HT encouraged governors to make an appointment with her via the school office so she could guide them through their monitoring responsibilities and look at children's understanding of British Values at the same time and perhaps attend one of the school's No Outsiders assemblies or lessons. The Clerk would circulate dates when the HT is free to do this.

ACTION: Clerk/All

- 9.2 The HT suggested it would also be useful for governors to do consider a strand of the new Ofsted toolkit reporting at each FGB meeting.

ACTION: Clerk/HT

Item 10 – Policies for approval

- 10.1 Governors discussed the Mobile Phone Policy. One governor commented that it seemed contradictory for the policy to say that visitors must leave their phone in their vehicle or hand it in at the office but then list places within the school where phones cannot be used. However, the HT advised that there were a few exceptions which made it necessary to include this list, for example visitors with medical reasons for needing to make/receive emergency call, or peripatetic tutors who might link their phones to audio for music tuition. The list also applies to staff who bring their phones to school but only use them in the staff room or office.
- 10.2 **Governors approved:**
- a) the Mobile Phone Policy**
 - b) the Restrictive Interventions Policy.**

Item 11 – Any other business

- 11.1 There was no other business and the meeting finished at 8.05pm.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 6 May 2026, 6-8pm

Kathryn Lanning
Clerk to Governors